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City of Columbia and County of Boone

Social Service Provider Capacity Evaluation 2013

Executive Summary

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Introduction

The City of Columbia and County of Boone contracted with Emily Johnson from the Institute of Public Policy at the University of Missouri to conduct a capacity evaluation of social service organizations that applied for Basic Needs and Emergency Services funding. This evaluation is the first in a three year evaluation process which will provide a comprehensive evaluation of all funding applicants in a three year cycle as follows:

2013- Basic Needs and Emergency Services
2014- Children, Youth, and Families
2015- Economic Opportunity, Independent Living, and Mental Health

The goals of the provider capacity evaluation process are to:

- Provide the City/County with an objective assessment of the organizational capacity of prospective social service providers to inform the annual social services funding process
- Provide applicant organizations with information which can be utilized to continuously improve the quality of their organizations and services

The evaluator conducted site visits with nine organizations that submitted responsive proposals for funding consideration. The evaluation assessed the provider's capacity in eight categories:

- Governance
- Financial Management
- Human Resources
- Information Management
- Service Delivery
- Performance Management
- Program-Based Budgeting
- External Relationships

Methods

In early 2013 the evaluator began working with staff from the Division of Human Services to develop the evaluation template to be used for the provider capacity evaluation. Appendix A is a copy of the provider capacity questionnaire and document list used for the evaluation. The template and scoring criteria were developed using a modified version of the McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid developed by Venture Philanthropy Partners¹.

In July, applicant organizations submitted letters of intent to the City/County and the evaluator was notified of the organizations to be evaluated in the RFP cycle. City staff sent the provider capacity questionnaire and document list to organizations and instructed them to prepare for the evaluator's site visit. The evaluator conducted individual site visits with the organization's executive director or designated staff in August.

During the site visit the evaluator asked the organization to answer and discuss the questions in the provider capacity questionnaire and allow the evaluator to review the documents indicated on the document list. The evaluator tape recorded the interviews for reference after the site visit. The evaluator also observed information management procedures, toured facilities, observed infrastructure and saw programming in action.

Once the site visit was complete the evaluator analyzed the collected data and produced a detailed capacity evaluation and overall evaluation score. The evaluator set scoring criteria for reaching certain levels of capacity as determined by the data collected during the organization's evaluation site visit, Appendix B is a copy of the scoring rubric. The evaluator used a three point scale for capacity scoring:

- 3 – High level of capacity in place
- 2 – Moderate level of capacity in place
- 1- Low level of capacity in place

Capacity scores are reflective of the capacity needs and opportunities of the organization and are not designed to evaluate the quality or impact of the organization or its program.

¹ McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid, Venture Philanthropy Partners. www.venturephilanthropypartners.org